

Community

Health Works

Transforming Health Together

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The Honorable Mike Johanns

Secretary of Agriculture

1400 Independence Avenue, SW

Washington, DC 20250-3355

December 12, 2005

RE: Request for Comments concerning the 2007 Farm Bill

Dear Secretary Johanns:

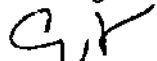
I am writing on behalf of Community Health Works, Inc., a regional network of physicians, hospitals, pharmacies and local governments working to extend access to healthcare for uninsured Georgians. This letter addresses the need for a focus on developing rural infrastructures, including the expansion of new technologies to rural areas.

Rural and very remote communities do not have access to the low-cost broadband services that they will need to uphold President Bush's bold agenda for implementing a nation-wide health information technology (HIT) infrastructure. Although Rural Utilities Service (RUS) funding has been an important resource for rural communities seeking to expand IT infrastructure, the funding is insufficient to meet the nation's needs.

We recommend a modification of the 2007 Farm Bill creating capacity to support broadband access for rural communities. High speed connectivity is critical for expanding access to healthcare in rural areas, exponentially increasing the communication and informational capabilities of rural hospitals, clinics and private health practitioners. If rural health services are to benefit from the HIT expansion initiative, broadband services must be extended to rural and very remote areas.

We believe that the 2007 Farm Bill is critical to achieving a timely expansion of HIT capabilities to rural communities, and seek your support for the investment.

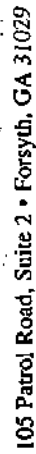
Best Regards,



Gregory J. Dent

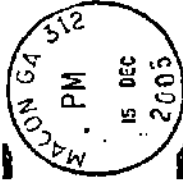
CEO, Health Care Central Georgia, Inc.

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Secretary of Agriculture
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